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UNCLAS ABUJA 000294

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EMBASSY VIENNA, PLEASE PASS TO IAEA

E.O. 12958: N/A

TAGS: ABUD KNNP TRGY PREL OVIP OPDC IAEA

SUBJECT: NIGERIA UNLIKELY TO OFFER SUBSTANTIAL SUPPORT FOR
IAEA BUDGET INCREASE

REF: STATE 013752

¶11. (U) On January 24 ECONOFF passed Deputy Secretary Armitage's letter (REFTEL) to the Ministry's Assistant Director for First United Nations Division A.O. Idowum who said he would pass it to Foreign Minister Lamido. Idowu was aware of the proposed increase in the IAEA's 2004-2005 budget. While noncommittal on the proposed increase, he claimed that Nigeria is up to date in its financial obligation to the IAEA.

¶12. (U) Idowu has been handling IAEA and disarmament issues for the past four years and he rates Nigeria's engagement with the IAEA highly, specifically thanking the IAEA for training staff of the National Hospital, National Agency for Food and Drug Administration and Control (NAFDAC), and academics from a number of universities during the last two years.

¶13. (U) Idowu also showed an interest in the International Conference on Security of Radioactive Sources March 10-13, 2003 in Vienna. The Ministry of Foreign Affairs will inform the Energy Commission of Nigeria and the Nigerian Nuclear Regulatory Authority, advising both organizations to send representatives to the conference.

¶14. (SBU) Comment: It is doubtful that Idowu's enthusiasm and support will be reflected in tangible Nigerian support for an IAEA budget increase at a time when Nigeria's budget is already stretched thin. For instance, the Foreign Ministry has reportedly been unable to pay its power and telephone bills in many embassies. However, Idowu assured us Deputy Secretary Armitage's letter would reach the Foreign

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Minister's desk with a positive recommendation.

JETER